

As an Amateur Extra (KB8FU), FCC GROL licensee (PG-19-9931), active Volunteer Examiner in the Amateur Radio Service, former GMRS licensee (KAD7920) and moderator of web forums on two-way radio issues, I suggest the following.

- Give all Technicians, code or non-code, the old Novice HF privileges. This gives 200 kHz of phone on 10 meters and some CW privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters. In effect, all technicians would become de facto Tech Plusses. Since the FCC database no longer differentiates between the two, this would make keeping track of who belongs where a lot easier, encourage learning Morse Code and open up some great DX opportunities.
- Drop the CW requirement for General and keep the privileges the same as they are today. This makes it much easier to gain all mode privileges on all bands by eliminating the psychological hurdle of learning Morse Code.
- Keep the exam requirements for Amateur Extra as is with a 5 WPM code exam. Anyone who wants "bragging rights" to the top license class should be able to master CW at least at the old Novice class level. If not, they would still have all modes on all bands available as General class licensees.

Morse Code aside, what I'd really like to see are exams that produce hams with basic technical skills. Too many people seem to memorize the published questions and answers but don't understand them. I'm not talking about turning out graduate Electrical Engineers, just people that know what they are doing and are capable of understanding basic principles. Even rudimentary skills are lacking, like knowing whether an antenna needs to be shorter or longer for different frequency bands.